

**November 27, 2022**  
**First Sunday of Advent**  
**White Gift Pageant**

**Welcome**

**Acknowledge the Land**

**Advent Wreath Liturgy**

**Luke 21:25-36**

“There will be signs in the sun, the moon, and the stars and on the earth distress among nations confused by the roaring of the sea and the waves. People will faint from fear and foreboding of what is coming upon the world, for the powers of the heavens will be shaken. Then they will see ‘the Son of Man coming in a cloud’ with power and great glory. Now when these things begin to take place, stand up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near.”

Then he told them a parable: “Look at the fig tree and all the trees; as soon as they sprout leaves you can see for yourselves and know that summer is already near. So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that the kingdom of God is near. Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all things have taken place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.

“Be on guard so that your hearts are not weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness and the worries of this life and that day does not catch you unexpectedly, like a trap. For it will come upon all who live on the face of the whole earth. Be alert at all times, praying that you may have the strength to escape all these things that will take place and to stand before the Son of Man.”

**When the world seems scary,  
When we try to escape and hide,  
The Holy invites us to confront fear,  
And we find Hope.**

*Candle is lit.*

**Hymn: “Light the Advent Candle”**

Light the Advent candle one  
Now the waiting has begun  
We have started on our way  
Time to think of Christmas day.  
Candle, candle burning bright  
Shining in the cold winter night  
Candle, candle burning bright  
Fill our hearts with Christmas light.

**Birthdays, Celebrations, and Life and Work of the Congregation – see last page ...**

**Hymn VU 1** “O Come, O Come, Emmanuel” (*optional*)

## **Call to Worship**

When life is messy and not going well,

*remember that God is with you and come to worship.*

When people are blaming you for something you haven't done,

*remember that God is with you and come spend time in God's community.*

When you step in the muck or hit your thumb with a hammer,

*take a deep breath and remember that God is with you.*

Come find comfort today in this gathering of God's people.

**We know that God is with us. That's why we're here to worship.**

**Hymn VU 43** "Go, Tell It on the Mountain"

Go, tell it on the mountain,  
over the hills and everywhere.

Go, tell it on the mountain  
that Jesus Christ is born.

While shepherds kept their watching

o'er silent flocks by night,  
behold, throughout the heavens  
there shone a holy light.

Go, tell it on the mountain,  
over the hills and everywhere.

Go, tell it on the mountain  
that Jesus Christ is born.

The shepherds feared and trembled

when lo, above the earth  
rang out the angel chorus  
that hailed our Saviour's birth!

Go, tell it on the mountain,  
over the hills and everywhere.

Go, tell it on the mountain  
that Jesus Christ is born.

Down in a lonely manger  
the humble Christ was born,  
and God sent our salvation  
that blessed Christmas morn.

Go, tell it on the mountain,  
over the hills and everywhere.

Go, tell it on the mountain  
that Jesus Christ is born.

## Opening Prayer

Compassionate God, sometimes life is messy. Sometimes we feel frightened, angry, confused, excited or frustrated, happy or sad, delighted or nervous, and sometimes just discombobulated. Sometimes we don't know what to feel. Give us a sign that it won't last forever. Remind us that a feeling is just a temporary thing, but you are always there for us, no matter what we are feeling, no matter how messy life gets. You are our God, and we are not alone. Thanks be to you, forever and ever. Amen.

## Hymn VU 59 "Joy to the World"

Joy to the world! the Lord is come:  
let earth receive her King!  
Let every heart prepare him room,  
and heaven and nature sing, and heaven and nature sing,  
and heaven, and heaven and nature sing.

Joy to the earth! the Saviour reigns:  
let all their songs employ,  
while fields and floods, rocks, hills and plains  
repeat the sounding joy, repeat the sounding joy,  
repeat, repeat the sounding joy.

No more let sins and sorrows grow,  
nor thorns infest the ground:  
he comes to make his blessings flow  
far as the curse is found, far as the curse is found,  
far as, far as the curse is found.

He rules the earth with truth and grace,  
and makes the nations prove  
the glories of his righteousness  
and wonders of his love, and wonders of his love,  
and wonders, wonders of his love.

## Scripture: Luke 1:26-38 *(Adapted and written by Susan Lukey)*

It was the sixth month of the year, when the angel Gabriel came to visit a young woman named Mary. Mary lived in the town of Nazareth in Galilee. She was engaged to a man named Joseph. The angel said to Mary, "Greetings, beautiful Mary. God is with you." But Mary was confused. "Who was this? Why was he saying these things to her?" The angel continued, "Do not be afraid, Mary. God has chosen you to do something special. You are going to have a baby, and it will be God's child. You will name him, Jesus, which means 'God saves us.' This baby of yours will be a great person. He will be called the Son of God. He will be the ruler of his people forever and ever." Mary was still confused. "How can this be? I'm not yet married." The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come to you. This will be God's holy child. Nothing is impossible for God." Then Mary nodded and said, "Here I am. I'm ready. Let it be just as you say." Then the angel left.

### **Mary's Monologue:**

This is a disaster. It was so amazing and so awesome when the angel came to me. I was overwhelmed with wonder. I felt as if I could do anything. But now the reality is setting in. What will Joseph say? What will my family say? What will the community say? How could God do this to me? I think I'm having a panic attack!

Oh dear, I said "Yes" to this.

What will Joseph say? Will he abandon me?

I really think I'm having a panic attack!

### ***sheep***

Baa! God is with you; you are not alone.

### **Hymn VU 7 "Hope is a Star"**

Hope is a star that shines in the night,  
leading us on till the morning is bright.

When God is a child there's joy in our song.

The last shall be first and the weak shall be strong,  
and none shall be afraid.

Peace is a ribbon that circles the earth,  
giving a promise of safety and worth.

When God is a child there's joy in our song.

The last shall be first and the weak shall be strong,  
and none shall be afraid.

Joy is a song that welcomes the dawn,  
telling the world that the Saviour is born.

When God is a child there's joy in our song.

The last shall be first and the weak shall be strong,  
and none shall be afraid.

Love is a flame that burns in our heart,  
Jesus has come and will never depart.

When God is a child there's joy in our song.

The last shall be first and the weak shall be strong,  
and none shall be afraid.

### **Scripture:** Matthew 1:18-25 (*Adapted and written by Susan Lukey*)

This is how the birth of Jesus happened. Mary and Joseph were engaged but they were not yet married. Mary told Joseph that she was pregnant with God's child. Joseph was a good man and he didn't want to hurt Mary. But he was also confused and upset. Then an angel came to Joseph in a dream and said, "Joseph, son of David, don't be afraid to take Mary as your wife. Her baby is God's child. It's true. When her son is born, name him Jesus. He will also be called 'Emmanuel.' That means 'God is with us.'" When Joseph woke up from his dream, he welcomed Mary into his home. Then, when her baby was born, he named him Jesus.

### **Joseph's Monologue:**

My life is a nightmare right now. I was working so hard to get ready for the wedding, building a house and all of the furniture that Mary and I would need. Then she comes to tell me she is pregnant. What am I supposed to say to that? She says the child is from God. What am I supposed to say to that? I have been so angry. I love Mary. I want to care for her. But how could she do this to me? And then this dream—telling me it will be alright. Okay. I'm a good person. I'll do what God asks, but my life still feels like a nightmare right now.

**sheep**

Baa! God is with you; you are not alone.

### **Anthem**

**Scripture:** Luke 2:7-7 (*Adapted and written by Susan Lukey*)

In those days an order went out from Emperor Augustus. He said that all the world should pay taxes. Everyone went to their own hometowns to pay the tax. Joseph went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to the city of Bethlehem because that was the place where his grandparents came from. He was engaged to Mary, and Mary was expecting a child. So, they travelled together to Bethlehem. When they got there, it was time for the baby to be born. Mary gave birth to her first son. She wrapped him in a blanket and laid him in a manger because there was no room in the inn.

### **Innkeeper's Monologue:**

What do people expect? That they can just come knocking at my door anytime of the day or night and find a room? Especially with the census going on and all these extra people. What do they think I am, a miracle worker? I was just tucked into my bed, everything done for the day, and then I heard it again. Knock, knock, knock. It was a young couple. She was pregnant and she was in labour. What was I to do? I had no room. I told them that. But tough as I try to be, I've got a soft heart when it comes to babies. So, I took them to the barn. I have no clue what they're going to do tomorrow. But for tonight they have a warm spot...a bit stinky but still warm. I'm heading back to bed.

I do feel sorry for that young couple, though! Having their baby in a barn!

**sheep**

Baa! God is with them; they are not alone.

**innkeeper**

That's right! Now you get back to the barn and remind them of that!

### **Hymn VU 69 "Away in a Manger"**

Away in a manger, no crib for a bed,  
the little Lord Jesus laid down his sweet head.  
The stars in the bright sky looked down where he lay,  
the little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay.

The cattle are lowing, the baby awakes,  
but little Lord Jesus, no crying he makes.  
I love you, Lord Jesus; look down from the sky,  
and stay by my side until morning is nigh.

Be near me, Lord Jesus, I ask you to stay  
close by me for ever, and love me, I pray.  
Bless all the dear children in your tender care,  
and fit us for heaven, to live with you there.

### **Sheep**

That's Emmanuel; that's God with us. We are not alone!

**Scripture:** Luke 2:8-16 (*Adapted and written by Susan Lukey*)

Near Bethlehem, there were shepherds living in the fields. They kept guard over their flocks of sheep each night. Suddenly the angel of the Lord appeared before them. The shepherds were afraid, but the angel said, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news, joyful news. Today in Bethlehem the Saviour has been born. Go and find the baby lying in a manger." Suddenly the sky was filled with angels who sang: "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and peace to everyone on earth." When the angels had left, the shepherds hurried to Bethlehem. They found Mary and Joseph and the baby in the manger. When the shepherds left the stable, they began to tell everyone about Jesus' birth. They shouted out praise to God as they returned to the fields. Mary listened carefully and watched carefully. She wanted to remember everything that happened that night. And Mary treasured all of this in her heart.

### **Shepherd's Monologue:**

It was amazing. No! Awesome. No! Tremendously outstanding. Astonishing, marvellous, inspiring, remarkable, incredible, surprising!

The angels. Hundreds of them. No, thousands of them.

The sky was full of them. I was there and still I don't believe it. And then one spoke and told of us of God's peace. And then told us about a baby from God, in Bethlehem. And that we should go and find the baby. And that's what we're doing. Going to Bethlehem. I just can't believe it. It's so amazing. But wait a minute. We left all the sheep in the field

Yikes, no one is watching the sheep!

I don't know what to do.

### **sheep**

Baa! God is with you; you are not alone.

### **shepherd**

Yes, little lambs, you're so good at helping me remember that!

### **Hymn VU 60 "O Come, All Ye Faithful" vss. 1, 3, & 4**

O come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant,

O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem:

come and behold him, born the King of angels;

O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him,

O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord.

Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation,

sing, all ye citizens of heaven above;

glory to God in the highest:

O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him,

O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord.

See how the shepherds summoned to his cradle,  
leaving their flocks, draw nigh with lowly fear;  
we too will thither bend our joyful footsteps;  
O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him,  
O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord.

**Scripture:** Matthew 2:1-12 (*Adapted and written by Susan Lukey*)

King Herod was king in Jerusalem when Jesus was born. Three wise travellers from the East came looking for the baby. They were following a star. They asked King Herod to help them find the baby. "Where is the child who has been born, the one who will be the new king? We saw his star in the east and we have come to worship him." When King Herod heard this, he was frightened. He called together his priests and scribes and asked where the child would be born. Then Herod gave the wise travellers directions to Bethlehem. He said to them, "Go, find the child, and when you find him, let me know where he is. I want to worship him, too." Then the wise ones set off again. They followed the star to Bethlehem. The star stopped over a house. The Wise Ones went in and found the baby and his mother. They knelt down and worshipped Jesus. Then they gave three gifts to the baby: gold, frankincense, and myrrh. A message came to them in a dream. They were told that King Herod wanted to kill the baby. So they didn't go back to Herod. They went home another way.

**Wise One's Monologue:**

You should have heard the arguments. We should go this way. No, the star is telling us to go this way. No, I'm sure it is this way. Talk about confusion. And then what to bring for a gift for a royal baby. Gold, frankincense, myrrh. I thought it should be a soft blanket, stitched with gold embroidery, of course. Yup— there were arguments before we left. Confusion about which way to go, confusion about what gift to bring. It's a wonder we even got on the road. Somehow, we made it to Jerusalem. We were welcomed into the presence of King Herod because, of course, we are important people. But somehow, I don't trust him. Yes, he gave us a possible location for the child. But he can't be too happy about this baby. It doesn't seem to be his son. He said to return and tell him about the baby, but I don't trust his motives. It's all quite confusing. I'm not sure how we're going to make sense of all this. Now, which way is Bethlehem? Looks like my friends have decided which way to go, though they aren't usually right about anything. They'll need my input. Confusing, confusing, confusing!

**sheep**

Baa! God is with you; you are not alone.

**Wise One**

One step at a time. Just one step at a time.

**Offering Hymn VU 55 "In the Bleak Midwinter"**

What can I give him, poor as I am?  
If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb;  
if I were a wise man, I would do my part;  
yet what I can I give him - give my heart.

## **Prayer of Dedication**

May the gifts we share be from the heart, just as yours was on that day, God of Bethlehem. May they serve those who look for welcome, those who struggle with loss and grief, those who need to be blessed by hope, and love, and healing. This we pray in the name of your Child, Jesus. Amen.

## **Prayers of Thanksgiving and Intercession & The Lord's Prayer**

Loving God, we are here to celebrate and to receive the story of the birth of Jesus. Yet, even as we celebrate, we know that there are many in need here and around the world.

*We think of those who won't be with family or friends for Christmas, those who are sad and grieving for a loved one, and all who are facing struggles and challenges of many kinds. And so we pray...*

### **May all the world know your love and peace, O God.**

We think of (name a current local or world situation—e.g., a place where there has been a recent disaster), And so we pray...

### **May all the world know your love and peace, O God.**

We think of (name a current local or world situation—e.g., the people who fight for human rights and dignity around the world) And so we pray...

### **May all the world know your love and peace, O God.**

We pray for the earth, and especially for the polar bears and other animals who are feeling the effects of climate change. May we, the people of the earth, find a path to heal the damage to our climate and to our earth. And so we pray...

### **May all the world know your love and peace, O God.**

*We pray for all animals, for wolverines, koalas, red pandas, and all the wonderful creatures you have made, O God. And so we pray...*

### **May all the world know your love and peace, O God.**

We think of all who are sick today and all who are grieving. We think of those who don't have homes in which to live, and those who aren't safe from abuse and violence at home. We think of those who are lonely and those who are being bullied. And so we pray...

### **May all the world know your love and peace, O God.**

*We think of those who are experiencing so many emotions this Christmas, especially those who are not feeling merry or joyous. And so we pray...*

### **May all the world know your love and peace, O God.**

We think of all women who are pregnant and all couples who are expecting a baby. We know they have worries as well as excitement. And so we pray...

### **May all the world know your love and peace, O God.**

*We can have so many different memories and emotions at Christmas. Like those there at the first Christmas, we can be happy, sad, joyful, angry, peaceful, and frustrated. Mary, Joseph, the shepherds, the Wise Ones, and the innkeeper all discovered you were with them. They found your peace when Jesus was born. In the same way, may we here and people everywhere find peace in knowing that you are with us, today and always. For Jesus came as Emmanuel, God-with-us. For this we give thanks and we pray the words that Jesus taught us:*



**Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.  
Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread;  
and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us;  
and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.  
For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, for ever and ever.  
Amen.**

**Hymn VU 35** "Good Christian Friends, Rejoice" vss. 2 & 3

Good Christian friends, rejoice  
with heart and soul and voice!  
Now ye hear of endless bliss: Joy! Joy!  
Jesus Christ was born for this!  
He hath opened heaven's door,  
and we are blest forevermore.  
Christ was born for this! Christ was born for this!

Good Christian friends, rejoice  
with heart and soul and voice!  
Now ye need not fear the grave: Peace! Peace!  
Jesus Christ was born to save!  
Calls you one and calls you all  
to gain his everlasting hall.  
Christ was born to save! Christ was born to save!

### **Commissioning and Benediction**

Go, make sure that you help create a world where everyone has full stomachs and a safe place to sleep.

*Go, make sure that everyone knows that God's love is with them, no matter what mess they are in.*

And remember!

*God's love is big love. God's arms can hold everyone in the world. God's heart keeps our hearts warm with compassion.*

### **Sheep**

Baa! God is with you! You are not alone! No matter how messy it gets!

**Response: VU 43** "Go, Tell It on the Mountain" *refrain*

Go, tell it on the mountain,  
over the hills and everywhere.  
Go, tell it on the mountain  
that Jesus Christ is born.